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C O N F I D E N T I A L ATHENS 000643

SIPDIS

STATE FOR EUR/SE

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TAGS: [PREL](#) [MARR](#) [GR](#) [TU](#) [CY](#) [TURKEY](#)

SUBJECT: TURKISH AMBASSADOR UPBEAT ON BUSY SCHEDULE OF
GREECE-TURKEY CONTACTS

REF: A. ATHENS 617

[1](#)B. ANKARA 1103

Classified By: AMBASSADOR CHARLES P. RIES FOR REASONS 1.4 (B/D)

[1](#)1. (C) As part of a broader effort to improve the tone of bilateral relations, Greece and Turkey are planning a busy season of high-level meetings, including visits to Ankara by the Greek Prime Minister, Foreign Minister, and Defense Minister, an optimistic Turkish Ambassador to Athens Tahsin Burcuoglu told Ambassador March 7. Additionally, Burcuoglu said, PM Karamanlis would hold a bilateral meeting with his Turkish counterpart March 22 or 23 on the margins of an upcoming European People's Party meeting (itself on the margins of the EU Council in Brussels). Current plans called for FM Molyviatis to go to Turkey sometime in April, with a visit by MFA Secretary General George Gennimatas to advance the trip, if needed. Assuming relations progressed as hoped, Molyviatis' visit would be followed by a trip by Defense Minister Spiliotopoulos later in the Spring and capped off by a visit to Ankara by PM Karamanlis by mid-year.

[1](#)2. (C) The two sides were working to put together a package of deliverables for the Molyviatis trip, Burcuoglu said, to include additional CBMs that go beyond those reached in February (ref B). This would hopefully include, he said, Turkish ideas such as removing weapons from aircraft flying in disputed areas over the Aegean. Turkey's job was to help Karamanlis change domestic perceptions of his administration's foreign policy as timid, Burcuoglu said. Molyviatis in particular was fighting an image of being unimaginative.

[1](#)3. (C) On a related topic, Burcuoglu said his government was urging Greece to find someone new to head its delegation in bilateral exploratory talks on Aegean issues. The current Greek head delegate, Greek Ambassador to London Skopelitis, was too busy in his current position to devote adequate time to the Aegean talks. Ankara's preferred replacement was MFA Secretary General Gennimatas.

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